

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-14, 17-34, 36-39, and 41-43 are presently active in the application. Claims 5, 9, 15, 16, 35, and 40 have been canceled.

Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 17-34, 36-39, and 41-43. Applicant further notes with appreciation the examiner's indication that claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

II.

The objection to claim 40 on page 2 of the office action is noted. As suggested by the examiner, claim 40 has been canceled.

III.

Claims 1, 2, and 6 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mori et al. (U.S. patent No. 5,995,802) in view of Chapman et al. (U.S. patent No. 6,560,432 B2). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants have submitted herewith a certified English translation of their Japanese priority application 2000-338116 filed November 06, 2000. That date predates the January 18, 2001 U.S. filing date of Chapman et al. Accordingly, Chapman et al. is not available as a reference against the claims of the present application. Thus, applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1, 2, and 6 under 35 USC 103(a) be withdrawn.

IV.

Claims 10, 11, and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mori et al. in view of Noguchi et al. (JP 10-260590). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Neither of the applied references teaches or suggests the stationary guide body adjoining the drive roller and contacting the belt at a side where the rotary body is positioned as set forth in claim 10. Applicant submits that the roller 2C does not teach or suggest the stationary body recited in claim 10. First of all, the element 2C disclosed by Noguchi et al. is a roller mounted for rotation and therefore it is not a stationary guide body as recited in claim 10.. Secondly, the element 2C disclosed by Noguchi et al. does not contact the belt 4A at a side where the rotary body is positioned. As shown in Fig. 9 of Noguchi et al., the element 2C is on the opposite side of the belt from the rotary bodies 111. Accordingly, applicant submits that the subject matter of claim 10 is not taught or suggested by the applied references.

Claims 11 and 13 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 10. Accordingly, those claims patentably distinguish over the applied references for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 10.

V.

In view of the above remarks, applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-14, 17-34, 36-39, and 41-43.

Respectfully submitted,

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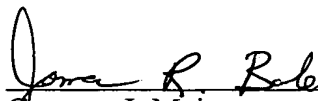
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